SURAH OF AZ-ZALZALAH

THE RESEARCH:
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THE REFERENCES

1) https://quran.com/az-zalzalah/info

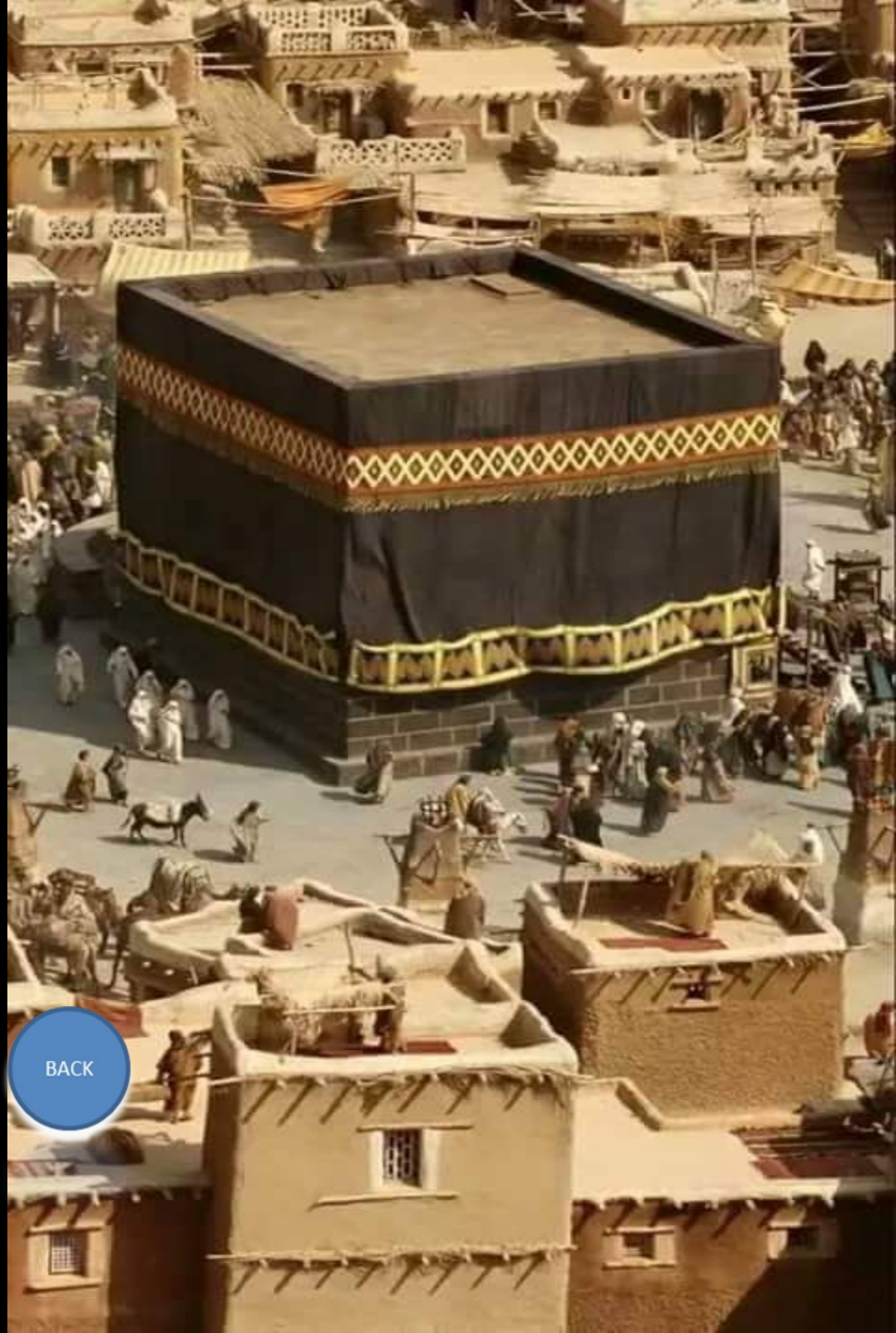
2) https://quran.com/az-zalzalah

THE BACKGROUND 1

Adapted from Tafsir Ibn Ashur

Themes and purpose:

This Makkan surah is primarily dedicated to proving the certainty of the Resurrection and divine recompense. Its purpose is to describe the terrifying signs of the Hour, particularly the earth’s confession, and to establish the principle of absolute, meticulous accountability for deeds, even those the size of an atom.



Context of Revelation:

- Era: Makkan according to the soundest view.
- Context: The surah was revealed to counter the polytheists' denial of the Resurrection and their mockery of the idea that their scattered bodies could be gathered for judgment.
- Chronology: According to those who considered it Madinan, it is the 94th surah in the order of revelation, after Sūrat al-Nisā’ and before al-Ḥadīd.

BACK

Name and Virtue

- Name: The surah is known as "Sūrat al-Zilzāl" and "Sūrat al-Zalzalah" (The Earthquake), as well as "Sūrat Idhā Zulzilat" (When It Is Shaken), in reference to the opening ayah.

- Virtue: The Prophet (ﷺ) stated that Sūrat al-Zalzalah is equivalent to half of the Quran.

Surah Overview:

- Affirming the certainty of the Resurrection and detailing the cosmic terror that precedes it. [1-3]
- Describing the earth's final act: expelling its contents (the dead) and speaking to testify to what happened on its surface. [2-4]

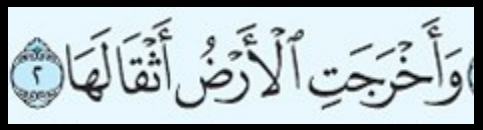
- Detailing the gathering of all people from their graves in scattered groups to face judgment. [6]
- Establishing the principle of absolute accountability and meticulous justice for every deed, no matter how minute. [7-8]

THE AYAT IN DETAILS 2

إِذَا زُلۡزِلَتِ ٱلۡأَرۡضُ زِلۡزَالَهَا ١

When the earth is shaken [in] its ultimate quaking,

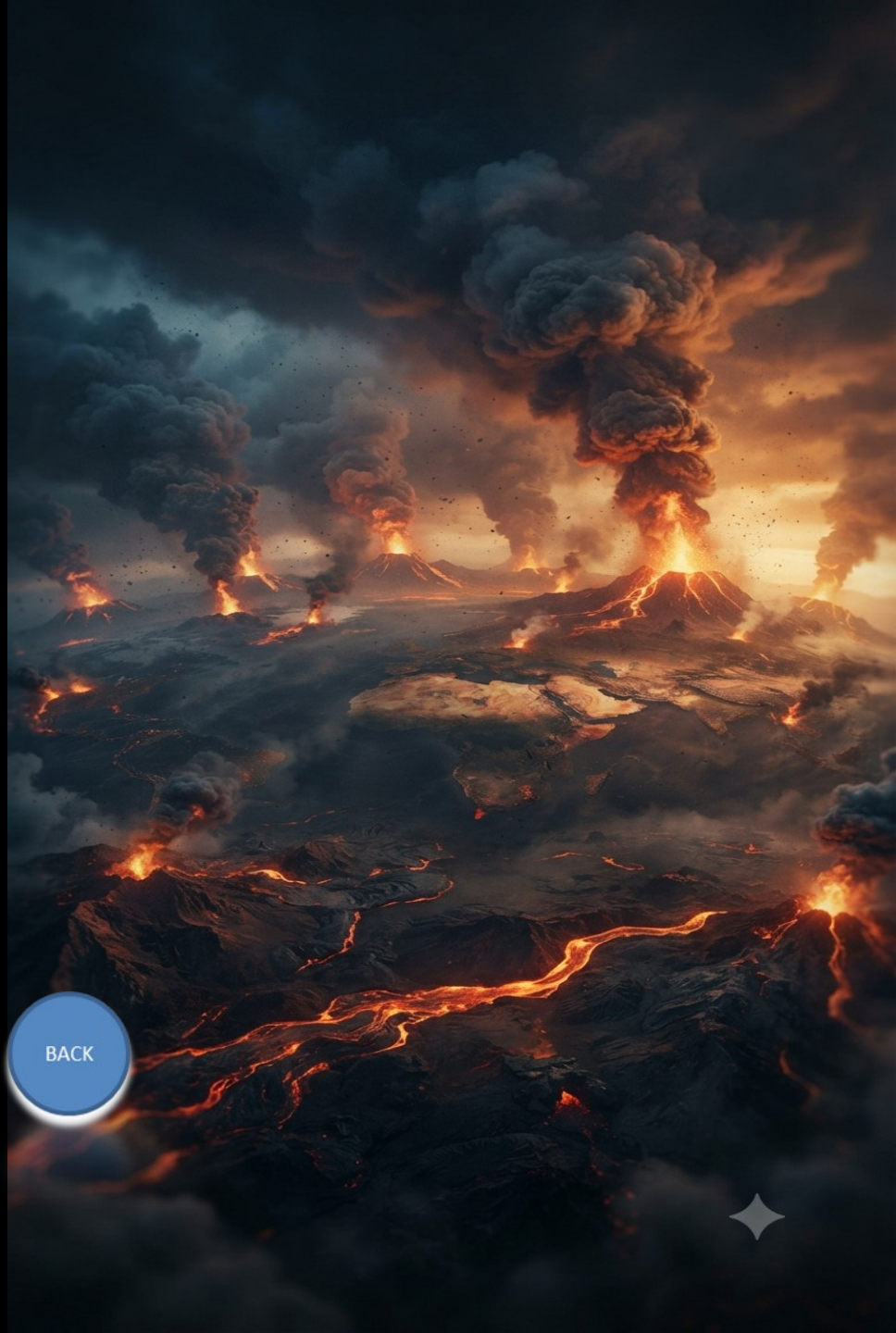
BACK



and when the earth throws out all its contents,1

Footnote - 1

lit., burdens (i.e., treasures and dead bodies).



إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ ٱلْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا ﴿١﴾ وَأَخْرَجَتِ ٱلْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا ﴿٢﴾ وَقَالَ
ٱلْإِنسَٰنُ مَا لَهَا ﴿٣﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا ﴿٤﴾ بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا

and humanity cries, “What is wrong with it?”—

BACK

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا ٤

on that Day
the earth will
recount
everything,

BACK

بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا

having been inspired by your Lord to do so.

BACK

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ ٱلنَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا۟ أَعْمَٰلَهُمْ ٦

On that Day people will proceed in separate groups[1] to be shown the consequences of their deeds.

Footnote - 1

The believers will head to Paradise and the disbelievers will head to Hell.

So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it.

BACK

وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُۥ ٨

And whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it.

EXCERCISES

BACK

1. Remembering (Recall)

1) What is the meaning of the word "Az-Zalzalah"?
2) What major event is described in the first verse of the surah?
3) What will the earth do on that Day?
4) What question will people ask when they see the earth shaking?
5) By whose command will the earth speak?

1. Remembering (Recall)

6) What will the earth report on the Day of Judgment?
7) Why will people come forth in scattered groups?
8) What will people be shown on that Day?
9) According to the surah, what happens to a person who does an atom's weight of good?
10) What happens to a person who does an atom's weight of evil?

2. Understanding (Comprehension)

1) Explain in your own words what is meant by "the earth throws out its burdens.“
2) Why do you think people will be surprised by the earthquake mentioned in the surah?
3) What does the surah teach us about Allah's knowledge of our actions?
4) How does the surah describe the fairness of Judgment Day?
5) What is the significance of the earth becoming a witness?

3. Applying

1) How can remembering this surah affect the way a person behaves every day?
2) If someone believes that every small action will be recorded, how might that influence their choices?
3) Give three examples of "an atom's weight" of good deeds that a student can perform.
4) How can this surah encourage people to avoid small sins?
5) What lesson from this surah can help someone become more responsible?

4. Analyzing

1) Compare the reaction of people in this surah with how people usually react to earthquakes in this world.
2) Why does the surah mention both good deeds and evil deeds at the end?
3) Analyze the relationship between accountability and justice in this surah.
4) How does the sequence of events in the surah build a picture of the Day of Judgment?
5) Why might Allah choose the earth itself to testify about human actions?

5. Evaluating

1) Which message of the surah do you think has the greatest impact on people's behavior? Why?
2) Do you think people would act differently if they constantly remembered that every action is recorded? Explain.
3) Why is it important that even the smallest deeds are counted?
4) Evaluate the statement: "Small good deeds are not important.“
5) Which is more dangerous: ignoring small sins or ignoring major sins? Support your answer using lessons from the surah.

6. Creating (Higher-Order Thinking)

1) Create a title other than "Az-Zalzalah" that captures the main theme of the surah.
2) Write a short moral lesson that summarizes the message of the surah.
3) Design a poster idea that illustrates the main teachings of the surah.
4) Imagine you are explaining this surah to a younger child. What example would you use to explain accountability?

6. Creating (Higher-Order Thinking)

5) Write a short reflection on how this surah can change a person's life.
6) Create a real-life scenario showing how a small good deed can lead to great reward.
7) Compose a question that this surah answers and explain the answer.
8) Develop a short speech encouraging others to pay attention to their small actions based on the teachings of this surah.

Higher-Order Reflection Questions

1) Why does Allah end the surah by mentioning an atom's weight of deeds rather than only major deeds?
2) How does belief in accountability create a better society?
3) What would happen if people believed that their small actions did not matter?

Higher-Order Reflection Questions

4) In what ways does this surah strengthen a believer's sense of justice and hope?
5) How does the surah balance fear of punishment with hope for reward?
6) What connection can you find between the earth's testimony and modern ideas of evidence and accountability?

و الحمد لله رب العالمين